

**BUDGET SESSION
CITY OF WATERTOWN
May 20, 2002
6:00 P.M.**

MAYOR JOSEPH M. BUTLER PRESIDING

PRESENT: **COUNCILWOMAN ROXANNE M. BURNS
COUNCILMAN PETER L. CLOUGH
COUNCILMAN PAUL A. SIMMONS
COUNCILMAN JEFFREY M. SMITH
MAYOR BUTLER**

ALSO PRESENT: **CITY MANAGER JERRY C. HILLER
ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER MARY M. CORRIVEAU
CITY COMPTROLLER JAMES M. McCAULEY
ASSISTANT COMPTROLLER BONNIE ROBBE
POLICE CHIEF ROBERT PICHE
FIRE CHIEF DAN GAUMONT**

Mayor Butler referred to Mr. Hiller's memo listing items for Council consideration.

Elimination of K-9 Positions(s)

Mayor Butler asked Chief Piche about this suggestion.

Chief Piche outlined the savings that could be realized with a canine position being eliminated. He also explained the scheduling and the fact that three shifts are now covered with the three units. If two of these positions were eliminated, call-in time on these shifts would result in over time expenses.

After discussion, Council agreed not to cut any of the K-9 positions. Councilwoman Burns suggested that when a dog is ready to retire, the Council could then address the issue.

Police Overtime

Mayor Butler explained that Council had been considering reducing the overtime budget by \$30,000.

Chief Piche commented that if the overtime were cut by more than \$20,000, it would be very tight.

Councilman Simmons remarked that he could support taking \$15,000 off the overtime budget.

Councilman Smith remarked that Council has to be cognizant of the fact that the Police overtime goes up and down and if the amount is cut and then it comes in over budget, it will just cut into the fund balance.

Councilwoman Burns remarked that she would rather see a cut in overtime instead of a cut in positions.

Councilman Clough remarked that Chief Piche seems to feel safe with a cut of \$20,000 and he would support that.

Council concurred to cut the police overtime budget by \$20,000.

Brownfields Grant

Councilman Smith asked if this was guaranteed.

Mr. Hiller explained that this amount is Mr. Liu's best estimate predicated on the amount of time that he and his employees would spend on the project.

Traffic Signal Upgrades

For this grant, Mrs. Corriveau explained that the \$10,000 should be added to revenues and the \$10,000 left in expenses and then if no grant is received, the work will not be done this year.

Fire Dept. Training Officer

Chief Gaumont answered questions posed by Council concerning the training expense. He explained that the training continues each year. He stated that he is not in favor of eliminating this position and would rather wait until the study comes in.

Discussion was held concerning the amount spent in overtime for the Fire Department. Mayor Butler commented that if the Council doesn't take the initiative to eliminate the position, another consideration would be to reduce the overtime by an additional \$50,000 to cover that amount.

Chief Gaumont stated that the overtime for this year has 13 months in it as a result of changes in the contract.

Mayor Butler remarked that he would propose reducing the overtime by \$90,000. He stated that up to this point, we haven't seen \$1.00 of savings from this department.

Chief Gaumont responded that the cuts were made in the budget prior to it being presented to Council.

Councilwoman Burns asked how many firefighters go to training other than in-house training.

Chief Gaumont explained that promotions require them to go to the NYC Fire Academy.

Councilman Simmons asked questions concerning the turnout gear.

Chief Gaumont explained that each year a certain number are being replaced to be in compliance with OSHA regulations.

Councilman Clough asked Chief Gaumont what his “comfort level” for a reduction in overtime would be.

Chief Gaumont responded that he would like to leave everything the same and wait until the consulting firm has given the City the report.

Councilman Smith commented that it is foolish to cut the overtime budget as it consistently comes in over the mark and it will only make things worse for next year.

Mayor Butler advised Council that they need to realize \$143,000 to bring the tax rate increase to 12%. He asked if there were any other suggestions of how to do this, other than cutting the overtime budget. He commented that people have told him that they would rather have a higher tax rate than to cut services.

Councilman Simmons commented that Council must look at the long-range plan. He suggested cutting the \$90,000 from the overtime and then if the study advises to cut three positions, the money can go back into the overtime budget.

Councilman Smith asked about the need to negotiate with the union for these cuts.

Mr. Hiller and Mrs. Corriveau explained that cutting positions doesn’t require negotiations with the union.

Councilman Clough asked what the actual overtime was for 2000-01.

Mrs. Corriveau supplied the figure of \$302,000 for that fiscal year.

Council agreed to cut \$90,000 from the Fire Department’s overtime budget to bring the tax rate increase to 12%. Councilwoman Burns, Councilman Clough and Mayor Butler voted in favor of the cut. Councilman Simmons explained that he couldn’t support a 12% tax rate increase. Councilman Smith also opposed the proposal.

Fire Dept. Secretary

Council concurred to leave the full-time secretarial position in the Fire Department's budget.

Councilwoman Burns commented that this is a 17-year employee and if there are times that she isn't being utilized full-time in the Fire Dept., she may be able to help out in another department.

Budget session ended at 6:58 p.m.

Donna M. Dutton, City Clerk